

# Help Your Child Choose a Fun Sport!

## What most children are looking for in a sport:

- Action
- Being part of the team
- Even competition and close scores
- Time to play with friends
- A voice in decisions
- Fun

## Before you choose, consider your child's:

- **Physical abilities** It is important to group children based on age, size, and physical maturity.
- **Cognitive level** Children have varying abilities to understand and remember instructions.
- **Social skills** Does your child like to play in groups, pairs, or alone?
- **Coping skills** How does your child deal with success, disappointment, stress, competition?

## Before you choose, parents should know:

- What sports programs are available and their goals
- What the costs are in terms of dollars and time
- How the sports program will fit with family goals and values
- Their own limitations
- Their child's coach and his or her qualifications and experience with children



- The sports program's safety record and plan

## How do you know you made the right choice? Ask yourself...

- Is your child excited about tomorrow? Or worried?
- Is your child having success in learning new skills?
- Does your child's activity improve family relations and support family values?
- Can your child keep up with homework, friendships, social activities?
- Does your child show signs of too much stress?
- Is your child having fun?

## Remember what's important:

- Your child is the consumer.
- Focus on your child's goals, not your own.
- Emphasize learning, not winning.
- Kids should try all kinds of sports.
- Talk to your child about his activities.
- Don't hesitate to drop a sport if your child is overly stressed by it.
- Keep sports fun!

# A Good Coach...

- Must know the sport and the kids. The coach must know about the physical development of boys and girls, what children are and are not capable of doing.
- Allows for differences in personality – what is right for one child is not necessarily right for another.
- Needs to be sensitive to children with physical disabilities and children coming from various social, economic, and racial backgrounds. The coach must give attention and instruction to all players to make them all feel part of the team.
- Must be skilled at teaching the fundamentals of the sport. Skill development is a major reason kids play – most children want to improve their abilities, and getting better at their sport is a prime source of enjoyment.
- Teaches young athletes to enjoy success and to respond to failure with renewed determination.
- Has more than just winning in sight. Long-term goals of helping young people develop physically, psychologically, and socially should take precedence over the goal of winning.
- Helps children develop positive self-images and learn standards of conduct that are acceptable to society.



## A Good Coach Teaches...

joy of competition

power of **kindness**

rewards of **cooperation**

meaning of **effort**

wisdom of **honesty**

virtue of **patience**

worth of **character**

**influence** of example

## Warning Signs of Poor Coaching...

- The coach uses profanity. There is no excuse for this – especially in junior sport.
- The coach argues with referees or officials. This provides a poor model for sportsmanship.
- The coach criticizes players – not their behavior. There is a big difference between saying, “John, keep your eye focused on the volleyball and hit it with the heel of your hand” and “John! If it weren’t for you, we could have scored an important point!”
- The coach will not listen to parents. We are not talking about parents who “coach from the sidelines,” but those who raise legitimate questions or concerns.
- The coach makes winning the only goal. Winning is a great goal to have, but it should not overshadow the larger goal of putting players’ development first.
- The coach ignores the lesser skilled players.
- The coach makes the kids feel worthy only when they win. Winning is great but the outcome of a contest has nothing to do with children’s worth.